

Roundup Bridge  
Spanning the Musselshell River  
South of U.S. Highway 12  
Roundup Vicinity  
Musselshell County  
Montana

HAER No. MT-25

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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**Location:** Spanning the Musselshell River just south of U.S. Highway 12, twelve miles east of Roundup, Musselshell County, Montana.

**Date of Construction:** 1893-94  
relocated and renovated 1911

**Present Owner:** Musselshell County  
Musselshell County Courthouse  
Roundup, Montana 59072

**Present Use:** Vehicular Bridge

**Significance:** On July 22, 1893, bids were opened by the Yellowstone County Commissioners to build an eight panel, 150-foot (wood) combination span across the Musselshell River at Roundup. Costs of the bridge were not shared with Fergus County, the county then on the north bank of the Musselshell (Yellowstone and Fergus Counties shared the cost of several later bridges over the Musselshell). The Hewett Bridge Company of Minneapolis had the low bid and on September 5, 1893, a contract was signed to build the bridge for \$6100.00, construction to be completed before June 6, 1894. This bridge was a major connection between Billings, the major commercial center on the Yellowstone River and Lewistown, center of the Judith Basin of Central Montana, an important early open range ranching region of the State and a just-developing grain farming area. In 1907-08, the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad constructed its transcontinental line through Montana with the main line traveling up the Musselshell River Valley. This provided access to markets for agricultural products from the Musselshell and opened the area up to more extensive settlement than had previously occurred. In 1911, the people of the Musselshell Valley formed their own county out of portions of Fergus County (north side of the river), Yellowstone County (south side), and Meagher County (the upper or west end of the valley). The same year Musselshell County was formed, the new county contracted with the

Security Bridge Company (earlier named the Hewett Bridge Company) of Billings and Minneapolis to build four new steel bridges across the Musselshell to join the two halves of the county together. One of the bridges was to be built at Roundup and the contract called for moving the 1893-94 combination span 13 miles downstream to the Brockway Ford, its present location. For that portion of the contract, Security received \$4830.00 and it moved the bridge, replaced some wood materials, erected new concrete abutments and gave the bridge "two coats of good red paint." The bridge stands today in fair condition, although it no longer boasts two coats of good red paint. The superstructure of the pin-connected Camelback through truss bridge is comprised as follows: lower chord is eyebars; verticals are 9x9 wood members; diagonals are eyebars and turnbuckles; upper chord is 12x12 wood members with galvanized sheet covering the top surfaces. 3x12 wood stringers rest atop double 6x12 wood floor beams which are suspended from the superstructure with U-bolts. (These stringers and floor beams are the same as was specified in the 1893 contract). Portals feature cast iron decorative elements repeated on another Hewett bridge (abandoned) in Stillwater County. The deck is of wood with a double plank driving track and the bridge is supported by concrete abutments. This bridge is the oldest remaining wooden bridge structure of any significant size in the State of Montana.

Transmitted by:

Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, 1984; from data compiled by Fredric L. Quivik, 1979

ADDENDUM TO  
ROUNDUP BRIDGE  
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